1   (b) configuring an ~~intelligent agent to execute the at least one selected~~
2   ~~program~~ module to handle the computer task.

1   50. (New Claim) The method of claim 49, wherein the intelligent agent includes
2   only the selected program module from the plurality of program modules, and wherein
3   the configuring step includes the step of constructing the intelligent agent using the
4   selected program module.

1   51. (New Claim) The method of claim 49, wherein the intelligent agent includes
2   each of the plurality of program modules, and wherein the configuring step includes the
3   step of configuring the intelligent agent to execute only the selected program module to
4   handle the computer task.

1   52. (New Claim) The method of claim 49, wherein the selecting step is
2   performed by the intelligent agent.

1   53. (New Claim) The method of claim 49, wherein the selecting step is
2   performed by an agent manager.

1   54. (New Claim) The method of claim 49, wherein the plurality of program
2   modules are additive program modules, and wherein the selecting step includes the step
3   of selecting a subset of the plurality of program modules to handle the computer task.

1   55. (New Claim) The method of claim 49, wherein the plurality of program
2   modules are alternative program modules, and wherein the selecting step includes the step
3   of selecting only one of the plurality of program modules to handle the computer task.

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1   56. (New Claim) The method of claim 49, wherein the selecting step includes the
2   step of adaptively selecting the selected program module using a reinforcement learning
3   algorithm.

1   57. (New Claim) The method of claim 56, further comprising the steps of:
2   (a) obtaining performance information relating to the performance of the
3   selected program module in handling the computer task; and
4   (b) supplying the performance information to the reinforcement learning
5   algorithm.

1   58. (New Claim) The method of claim 56, wherein the reinforcement learning
2   algorithm is implemented in an adaptive heuristic critic neural network.

1   59. (New Claim) The method of claim 49, wherein the selecting step includes the
2   steps of:
3   (a) matching each of the plurality of program modules with a value of the
4   objective criteria;
5   (b) determining a selected value of the objective criteria; and
6   (c) selecting as the selected program module a program module matching
7   the selected value of the objective criteria.

1   60. (New Claim) The method of claim 59, wherein the selecting step further
2   includes the step of retrieving information for a selected computer task, wherein the
3   determining step determines the selected value of the objective criteria using the retrieved
4   information.

1   61. (New Claim) The method of claim 49, wherein the intelligent agent is
2   configured to conduct negotiations in an electronic commerce application, and wherein

1   the domain knowledge for each of the plurality of program modules is related to the

2   autonomy delegated thereto.

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    62. (New Claim) The method of claim 61, wherein the plurality of program

2   modules includes a semi-autonomous program module, a fully-autonomous program

3   module, and a fully-dependent program module.

1   63. (New Claim) The method of claim 61, wherein the objective criteria includes

2   a risk that a dispatched agent is subjected to in negotiations.

1   64. (New Claim) An apparatus for handling a computer task, comprising:

2   an intelligent agent including at least one of a plurality of program

3   modules having varied degrees of domain knowledge, wherein the plurality of

4   program modules are configured to handle a common computer task, and wherein,

5   based upon an objective criteria, at least one selected program module from the

6   plurality of program modules is selected to handle the computer task.

1   65. (New Claim) The apparatus of claim 64, further comprising an evaluation

2   module configured to select the selected program module based upon the objective

3   criteria.

1   66. (New Claim) The apparatus of claim 65, further comprising a reinforcement

2   learning module, coupled to the evaluation module and configured to adaptively select

3   program modules based upon the performance of the plurality of program modules in

4   handling the computer task.

1   67. (New Claim) The apparatus of claim 66, wherein the reinforcement learning

2   module comprises an adaptive heuristic critic neural network.

1   68. (New Claim) The apparatus of claim 65, wherein the evaluation module is
2   configured to retrieve information for a selected computer task, determine a selected
3   value for the objective criteria for the selected computer task, and select as the selected
4   program module one of the plurality of program modules which is matched with the
5   selected value of the objective criteria.

1   69. (New Claim) The apparatus of claim 65, wherein the evaluation module is
2   implemented in an agent manager.

1   70. (New Claim) The apparatus of claim 65, wherein the evaluation module is
2   implemented in the intelligent agent.

1   71. (New Claim) The apparatus of claim 65, wherein the intelligent agent
2   includes only the selected program module from the plurality of program modules, and
3   wherein the evaluation module is configured to construct the intelligent agent using the
4   selected program module.

1   72. (New Claim) The apparatus of claim 65, wherein the intelligent agent
2   includes each of the plurality of program modules, and wherein the evaluation module is
3   configured to execute only the selected program module to handle the computer task.

1   73. (New Claim) The apparatus of claim 65, wherein the plurality of program
2   modules are additive program modules, and wherein the evaluation module is configured
3   to select a subset of the plurality of program modules to handle the computer task.

1   74. (New Claim) The apparatus of claim 65, wherein the plurality of program

2   modules are alternative program modules, and wherein the evaluation module is

3   configured to select only one of the plurality of program modules to handle the computer

4   task.

1   75. (New Claim) The apparatus of claim 64, wherein the intelligent agent is

2   configured to conduct negotiations in an electronic commerce application, and wherein

3   the domain knowledge for each of the plurality of program modules is related to the

4   autonomy delegated thereto.

1   76. (New Claim) The apparatus of claim 75, wherein the plurality of program

2   modules includes a semi-autonomous program module, a fully-autonomous program

3   module, and a fully-dependent program module.

1   77. (New Claim) The apparatus of claim 75, wherein the objective criteria

2   includes a risk that a dispatched agent is subjected to in negotiations.

    78. (New Claim) A method of handling a computer task on a remote computer

2   system using an intelligent agent, the method comprising the steps of:

3   (a) determining a risk for the remote computer system;

4   (b) based upon the risk for the remote computer system, selecting at least

5   one selected program module from a plurality of program modules having varied

6   degrees of domain knowledge, wherein the plurality of program modules are

7   configured to handle a common computer task in the remote computer system;

8   and

9   (c) configuring an intelligent agent to execute the at least one selected

10   program module to handle the computer task.

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